

# **NOAA Employee Worklife Center Pilot Program Year-End Report**

**Prepared May, 2002  
NOAA Office of Diversity**

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## **Tears of a Father**

### **by Bob Maier**

I feel so confused, hurt and utterly sad.  
The child that I thought was mine is gone.

I want to cry.  
Cry for the child who will never ask, "Why?"  
"Why do the leaves turn red in the autumn?"  
"Why do I have to go to bed right now?"  
"Why are you crying, Daddy?"

Son, what will you be when you grow up?  
I once thought you'd be a zoologist, traveling to exotic places,  
studying the rare and wonderful animals you've always loved.

When you were less than a year old, sitting motionless,  
listening to mommy's choir sing,  
I dreamt that someday you would be a creator of beautiful music.

My child has been taken from me!  
But that can't be?  
He's here with me now.  
He hasn't changed.  
Yet still, I feel as though he's gone.  
My child has somehow died.  
The child of my dreams and hopes is no more.

I know that these feelings are normal and helpful,  
that I shouldn't feel guilty for having them.  
All the experts tell me this.  
But it doesn't help the pain.

Things are getting better though.  
The funeral for the child of expectations is over now.  
Oh, I still visit the cemetery from time-to-time.  
I put Cub Scout caps and grade-school science projects at his grave.  
But I don't spend so much time there anymore.

I have another son to love.  
The one they call "autistic."  
He's such a sweet boy.  
He's never mean to anyone, and he squeezes so tight when he hugs me.  
He loves to dance with his daddy, and he gets such a cute smile  
on his face when he says, "I did it!"

He's still the same boy who loves monkeys,  
Peter Pan, kiwi fruit and throwing rocks in the water.

I'm learning to love my new son,  
and he has always loved me.

*Bob Maier works as a fisheries biologist and is a member of the Parenting Special Needs Discussion Group. He lives with his wife, Deborah, and two sons -- Karl, 6, and Keith, 4, in Edmonds, Washington. Bob wrote this poem after Karl was diagnosed with autism at age three and has shared it with the Discussion Group to help other parents work through their feelings. Karl is now fully included, with the help of an aide, in a regular kindergarten class at his local elementary school. Recently, to his father's surprise and delight, he has started asking his first "why" questions.*

## Executive Summary

The National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Employee Worklife Center opened its doors for the first time on June 21, 2001 as a pilot sponsored by the NOAA Diversity Council. The NOAA Worklife Center has had the unique challenge of serving employees dispersed over nearly 400 locations in remote areas of the world, including locations at sea. NOAA's Employee Worklife Center has the unique distinction of being the only Center of its kind in the Department of Commerce.

Throughout this first pilot year, the Center has served over 1,200 employees located at Headquarters and in the Field. Information has been provided to these employees on topics such as careers, child care/parenting, elder care, financial management, health & wellness, and diverse workplace issues. In addition to serving employees on a one-on-one basis, seminars and resource fairs have been held and discussion networks have been formed. Employees have talked about the invaluable service they have received and how the center has truly helped them through a difficult time or issue. In addition, the discussion networks have enabled employees to help one another. One employee, a member of the Parenting Children with Special Needs discussion network, was able to write a poem of how he deals with the difficulties this task entails. This poem (see previous page) sparked an on-line forum where employees from Maryland, California, and DC share articles, stories, resources, and an understanding ear.

The events that the Center offers are only one way in which the Worklife Center meets the needs of NOAA employees. The lactation facility and relaxation resources became a valuable feature for nursing mothers and individuals working with an exceptional amount of stress. These private areas provide individuals with the resources needed so they can then better focus on their jobs. Not only do the on-site employees find these services beneficial, many employees have used the relaxation area and lactation room when at the Silver Spring campus for meetings and/or assignments.

*Navigations*, the Worklife Center newsletter, has been very well received, especially by those in the Field. The articles focusing on the key issues employees face around the globe, can be invaluable to those dealing with those issues. The Center has received strong positive feedback on the timeliness and value these articles offer. In addition, the NOAA Employee Worklife Center Web site offers a structure for communicating with employees and helping to meet the needs of those remote to the center.

The Worklife Center served 48% of NOAA Headquarters employees and 8% of Field employees throughout the Pilot. Compared to other Federal Worklife Centers, NOAA's program is doing exceptionally well. Throughout this pilot program, many employees, both in the field and locally, have praised the Center for the quality of the services offered. Local employees have conveyed how appreciative they are that these services are available. In addition, field employees appreciate the prompt and concise service they receive no matter where they may be throughout the world. Employees have expressed their desire to have the NOAA Employee Worklife Center given a permanent home at NOAA.

This report outlines the usage, activities, and feedback of the Center from opening through April 8, 2002 and includes the following recommendations:

## Recommendations

- **Continue to fund the NOAA Employee Worklife Center.**
- **Expand services to field locations** - put relaxation rooms in each facility equipped with a relaxation chair and install a separate sink area for lactation. Set up kiosks in field sites, which will be filled by the Office of Diversity but maintained by the offices; identify worklife coordinators who can request worklife seminar tapes for local meetings; and increase travel funds for site visits.
- **Explore the following options** to increase awareness and usage of the program to better meet employees' needs.

**Grow headquarters program** - develop a comprehensive local program which could then be implemented at key field locations in subsequent years.

**Conduct field visits or conferencing sessions** - marketing the program to and through employees at different locations by visiting their site or conferencing employees will allow field awareness to increase, as well as the understanding of the needs of remote employees.

**Increase the use of technology** - add Information Technology support services which would allow the Web site to more effectively bring the services of the Worklife Center to all NOAA employees.

**Use additional marketing tools** - currently, the *Navigations* newsletter is the main source for marketing the center and its services. Additional means of marketing should be explored and implemented to ensure all NOAA employees know what is available to them. This can take the form of e-mail announcements, Web site enhancements, mailings, etc.

**Adjust center hours to cover peak usage** - ensure that the center has adequate coverage during peak times. Time when the center is currently open and there is little or no usage could instead be used to visit field locations or provide other field support services.

**Integrate Worklife Advisor with Office of Diversity Staff** - a more team focused approach to the center will ensure quality services and no duplication of efforts.

**Establish additional "discussion networks"** - it has been proven that NOAA employees are more interested in establishing on-line networks of individuals with whom they can discuss a specific issue as opposed to the more typical face-to-face discussion groups. Additional networks should be formed on topics of interest to NOAA employees.

## Introduction

The NOAA Diversity Council approved the establishment of the NOAA Employee Worklife Center for a one year pilot period. NOAA contracted with Caliber, Fried and Sher, Inc. (CF&S) in May, 2001 to staff the Center and to be responsible for the worklife program services provided by the Center. The purpose of this report is to 1) summarize the services provided during the pilot year; 2) to recommend whether or not the Council should continue to fund the NOAA Employee Worklife Center; and 3) to determine, if funded for subsequent years, whether to renew the contract with (CFS) which ends April 30, 2002 or to explore other options.

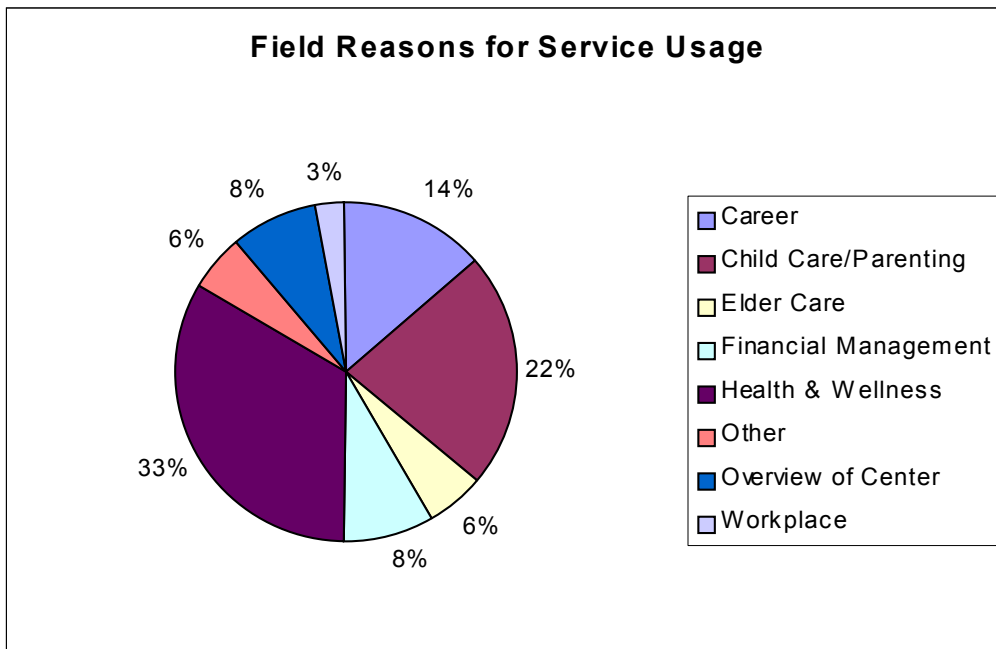
The Employee Worklife Center opened in June, 2001 to offer employees located in the field and Headquarters one-stop service for their worklife needs. It was envisioned that the Worklife Center would be a place where employees could obtain information and resources to help them maintain a healthy balance between their work and home responsibilities by providing them with the best and most comprehensive worklife services possible. Whether located in Silver Spring, Oklahoma, Hawaii, or on a NOAA ship, resources would be available to address employee worklife needs ranging from child and elder care, financial planning, parenting, retirement, shiftwork, wellness, working at sea and other issues which impact the balance between their work and personal lives.

## **Center Usage**

From its opening on June 21, 2001 until April 8, 2002, the NOAA Employee Worklife Center has received over 1,200 employee requests for worklife information and resources. 94% of these requests have been from Headquarters employees and 6% have been from employees located in the field. 60% of requests have been from women and 40% from men.

## **Field Requests**

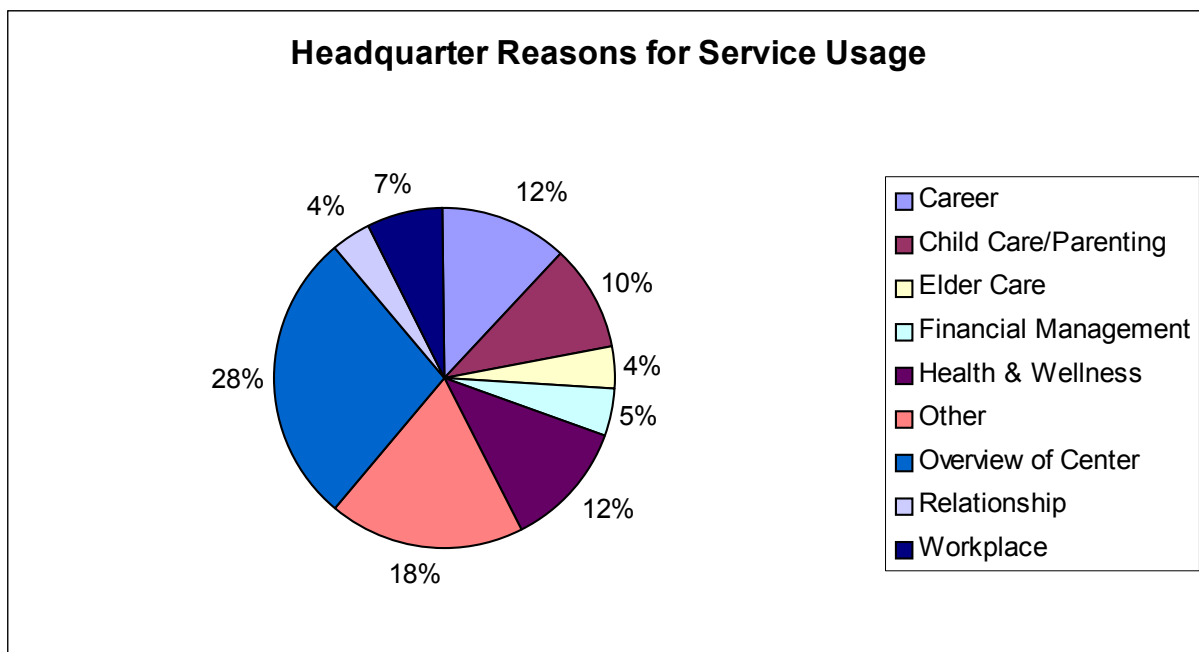
As of April 8, 2002, a small, yet satisfied group of field employees (a total of 73) used the Worklife Center services. These employees represent 23 offices located throughout the country. The locations with the highest usage by the field include California, Michigan, Washington, Hawaii, Alaska, Virginia and Oklahoma. Employees from Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Kansas, Colorado, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, Oregon, Tennessee, Texas, Utah and in the DC metropolitan area (excluding Headquarters) also contacted the Center. The following chart represents the topics for which field users contacted the Worklife Center.



### **Headquarters Requests**

Over 1,100 local employees have used the services of the Worklife Center between June 2001 and April 2002. Topics of interest are diverse, and the chart below shows the most popular topics employees presented to the Worklife Center. The majority of individuals contacted the Center through a walk-in. E-mail and phone contacts were used less often, but were a valuable option for those who could not visit in person.

In addition to the above topics, information was also requested on menopause,



pregnancy, tutoring, grief and loss of a loved one, relocation, telecommuting, after school care, anthrax, social security, employment at NOAA for young adults with disabilities, domestic violence, substance abuse and SFA.

### **Peak Usage Hours**

The Worklife Center is open Monday through Friday between the hours of 7:30 AM and 6:00 PM. The opening and closing times of the center vary by day of the week. The time individuals came into, called or e-mailed the center was tracked, as was the number of times the lactation room and relaxation room were used. Peak usage hours are between 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM. There is little use of the center services before 9:00 AM and after 5:00 PM. The table below represents peak usage hours of the center.

<b>Peak Times of Center Usage Per Day</b>					
	Before 9:00	9:00 - 1:00	11:00 - 2:00	2:00 - 5:00	After 5:00
Monday	-	25%	49%	23%	3%
Tuesday	6%	26%	44%	24%	-
Wednesday	6%	25%	48%	20%	1%
Thursday	1%	27%	51%	21%	-
Friday	-	25%	60%	15%	-

The  
Lactation

Room has been used 208 times by approximately ten different users, while the Relaxation Room has been used 79 times by 15 different users.

### **Worklife Seminars**

Worklife seminars on the following subjects were held in Headquarters. Attendance at most seminars was low. Low attendance levels could be attributed to insufficient marketing, the time the seminars were held, or little interest in the seminar topic.

*Financial Planning - 45 attendees*

*Caring for Your Young Child - 11 attendees*

*Basic Financial Planning/Retirement Planning - 2 attendees*

*Coping with Trauma and Grief - 1 attendee*

*Elder Care - 1 attendee*

*Nutrition - 10 attendees*

*Alzheimer's Disease - 6 attendees*

*College Education Planning Series - 3 attendees*

In addition, a "Meet and Greet" session was held for employees in Seattle and the Worklife Center helped to coordinate a Balancing Work and Family and Shiftwork



seminar for employees in White Lakes, Michigan.

### **Worklife Resource Fairs**

Worklife resource fairs were held in Silver Spring on the following topics. These resource fairs were held during lunch hours in the SSMC 3 cafeteria (with the exception of the Balancing Work and Family Life, held outside of the NOAA auditorium) which would explain the overall higher level of participation at these events.

*Balancing Work and Family Life - 2 attendees*

*Back to School - 35 attendees*

*Parenting - 34 attendees*

*Health and Fitness - 35 attendees*

*Health and Wellness - 35 attendees*

*Worklife Resources - 32 attendees*

*Holiday Wellness - 20 attendees*

*Elder Care - 40 attendees*

*Summer Camp - 40 attendees*

*Adolescence - 25 attendees*

### **Discussion Groups**

The following discussion groups were formed to provide employees the support they need to help them through difficult times. These facilitated discussion groups give NOAA employees the opportunity to network and share information around specific issues that affect their lives at home and work.

*Prostate Cancer*

*Diabetes*

*Breast Cancer*

*Parenting Children with Special Needs*

### **Worklife Newsletter**

Seven issues of Navigations, the NOAA Employee Worklife Center's newsletter, were issued to all employees. The newsletters contained information and resources on topics such as health, cancer, elder care, sleep, wellness, shiftwork, coping with grief and loss, nutrition, grand parenting, loneliness and holiday stress.

### **Usage at Other Federal Agencies**

The NOAA Employee Worklife Center has been able to obtain exceptionally high usage for a first year pilot, with 48% of employees located in Silver Spring and 8% of Field employees using the Center. The Center has been serving employees for less than a

year, and has many opportunities for additional growth. It should also be noted that NOAA is the only agency in the Department of Commerce with an Employee Worklife Center. As a comparison, the following notes summarize information obtained from other Federal Worklife Centers at the Department of Transportation (DOT) and The National Institutes of Health (NIH). These are all established programs (operating for more than 5 years) with several Worklife staff serving the needs of employees. In addition, information from the Office of Personal Management (OPM) March 2000 Report to Congress shows the number of inquiries responded to by OPM.

**DOT:** In the 2001 fiscal year, 2,112 department employees utilized the DOT Connection Worklife services, that are similar in nature to the NOAA Employee Worklife Center services. Approximately 2% of global DOT employees used the Worklife Center services and an additional 20,640 resource materials were distributed. DOT Connection services are offered to all DOT employees, which includes individuals from thirteen agencies.

**NIH:** During the first two quarters of fiscal year, 2002, the NIH Work & Family Life Center served close to 5,400 employees (30%) in services similar to the NOAA Employee Worklife Center. While this number may seem high, it is important to note that the NIH Center has an employee base of approximately 18,500. The following is a breakdown of the usage:

General Inquiries (general e-mail and phone calls, library browsers, workstation users, employment questions): 4,292

Consultations/Referrals: (Work/Life, Child Care, Elder Care, Legal, Financial): 266

Events: 581

Lactation: 241

**OPM:** Data collected from March 1, 1999, until December 31, 1999, indicated a total of 2,540 individual contacts with the Office via email, telephone, facsimile, mail, and in person, for an average monthly contact rate of 254. Fifty-six percent of the contacts were made by telephone, 41 percent via email, and the remaining three percent via facsimile, mail or in person. Most of these contacts, 2,402 (95 percent), were inquiries about family-friendly workplace arrangements; 70 contacts or less than 3%, were expressions of concern or grievance, 13 were suggestions, and 332 were non-inquiry contacts (such as notifications and acknowledgments). Inquiries came from across the entire Federal Government throughout the United States and from overseas locations. Over one-half of the individuals contacting the Office had done so in the past, and over one-half were contacting the Office as representatives of their organization rather than as individuals.

## **The Customer Response**

The Office of Diversity received 30 feedback forms from those who used the services of the Worklife Center. Of those who contacted the Center for information, 79% found the Worklife Advisor(s) knowledgeable, 87% would use the Center again, 72% would recommend the Center to others and 80% found the hours to be flexible enough for them. 90% rated the Advisor excellent or good for making them feel comfortable, 63% felt that the Advisor did an excellent or good job in customizing materials, 80% rated the quality of service received as excellent or good, and 80% rated the Center as excellent or good in meeting their expectations. The most requested topics were Health and Wellness, Elder Care, Parenting Young Children, Financial Planning and Other (miscellaneous topics). See the Appendix for a summary of customer responses to the questions on the feedback form as well as employee comments sent directly to the Center or to the Office of Diversity.

In addition to the Employee Worklife Center feedback forms, the Office of Diversity sent out a brief employee survey with the transmittal of the April Navigations to solicit employee feedback on the services of the Worklife Center. 380 responses were received -- 20 of which were lost due to email system problems. Of those who took the survey 77% said that the services were beneficial to NOAA employees, 37% have actually used the services, 71% want the services continued in Headquarters and 70% feel that the services should be expanded to the field. The following depicts the results of this short survey, based on 360 responses. Additional comments from this survey and are provided in the Appendix.

### **Negative Feedback**

Although the Center has received mainly positive feedback and the overall satisfaction with the Center by employees is high, there were a few occasions where the employee need was not met or met in a less than timely fashion. To date, the Worklife Center received two negative comments in writing. Both of these comments were made by individuals who came to the Center for resources and were not followed up with within 24 hours. When employees were followed up with they no longer needed support from the Center. The other complaint the Center received was in regards to the lactation room. Nursing mothers would prefer direct access to the space rather than requiring assistance to enter.

Negative comments about the Center received from employees who completed the Worklife Center Feedback Form or the survey that was transmitted via Navigations are located in the Appendix.

### **Recommendations**

On average, the Employee Worklife Center receives 20 - 30 requests a week. 87% of

those who have used the Center will use the resources again and 72% would recommend the Center to others, 20% responding that it would depend on what the topic was. The majority of user's comments about the Center have been positive and most have commented that the Center has good information and that the services provided are necessary and should be retained. The lactation and relaxation rooms and relaxation chair are among the Center's most popular services.

When asked if the Center's services are a valuable companion to EAP, employees responded that the Center further enhances EAP with a variety of resources on a number of different life issues; the Center is more personal and convenient than EAP; the services are more customized; and, in many cases, the information at the Center can be used to prevent the need for EAP. See the Appendix for additional comments on the Worklife Center and EAP.

### **Center Costs**

The following is a breakdown of costs spent on the establishment and management of the Center for fiscal years 00, 01 and 02:

TYPE	COST
Construction	\$ 35,471.19
Utilities	\$ 11,029.35
Furniture	\$ 23,822.94
Marketing	\$ 52,763.49
Carpeting	\$ 989.22
Drapes	\$ 2,487.00
Opening Ceremony	\$ 655.47
Videotaping/captioning	\$ 6,352.50
Publications	\$ 8,786.94
Contract	\$189,010.00
Grand Total	\$331,368.10

Based on the level of usage, feedback from customers using the Center, and the costs associated with establishing the Worklife Center, the Office of Diversity is recommending that the NOAA Diversity Council continue to fund the NOAA Employee Worklife Center.

After analyzing the data, talking with users of the center, and looking at past successes with Worklife Programs, it is recommended that the following options be examined to increase awareness and usage of the program and better meet the needs of NOAA employees.

- **Expand services to field locations** - establish relaxation rooms in each facility equipped with a relaxation chair and install a separate sink area for lactation. Set up kiosks in field sites, which will be filled by the Office of Diversity but maintained by the offices; identify worklife coordinators who can request worklife seminar tapes for local meetings; and increase travel funds for site visits.
- **Grow headquarters program** - develop a comprehensive local program which could then be implemented at key field locations in subsequent years.
- **Conduct field visits or conferencing sessions** - marketing the program to and through employees at different locations by visiting their site or conferencing employees will allow field awareness to increase, as well as the understanding of the needs of remote employees.
- **Increase the use of technology** - add Information Technology support services which would allow the Web site to more effectively bring the services of the Worklife Center to all NOAA employees.
- **Use additional marketing tools** - currently, the *Navigations* newsletter is the main source for marketing the center and its services. Additional means of marketing should be explored and implemented to ensure all NOAA employees know what is available to them. This can take the form of e-mail announcements, Web site enhancements, mailings, etc.
- **Adjust center hours to cover peak usage** - ensure that the center has adequate coverage during peak times. Time when the center is currently open and there is little or no usage could instead be used to visit field locations or provide other field support services.
- **Integrate Worklife Advisor with Office of Diversity Staff** - a more team focused approach to the center will ensure quality services and no duplication of efforts.
- **Establish additional "discussion networks"** - it has been proven that NOAA employees are more interested in establishing on-line networks of individuals with whom they can discuss a specific issue as opposed to the more typical face-to-face discussion groups. Additional networks should be formed on topics of interest to NOAA employees.

Many of these options can be easily accomplished. While some have little or no cost, others will require additional time and resources. For example, the costs associated with a relaxation chair and lactation room are nominal. A relaxation chair similar to the one located in the Worklife Center costs \$2,945.00 excluding delivery charges. According to OPM guidelines, at a bare minimum, all that is required for a lactation room is a room with an outlet, refrigerator and chair that can be used as a pumping station.

Several Centers in the DC Metropolitan area have hired full time government

employees as advisors and contracted with a vendor like Caliber, Fried, and Sher, to provide necessary resource support. The Social Security Administration, Department of Transportation, Department of Health and Human Services, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and Department of Defense have full-time work/life specialists who are responsible for:

- Promoting the use of family-friendly initiatives within their agencies;
- Working with managers and supervisors to encourage the implementation of family-friendly workplace policies;
- Providing technical assistance to employees and supervisors on various family-friendly initiatives and ensure that information on the full range of flexibilities (e.g., child care, alternative work schedules, telecommuting, part-time employment, and job sharing) is available to help employees meet their personal and family responsibilities;
- Establishing and promoting parent support groups, elder care support groups, and on-site nursing mothers programs;
- Providing resources and training for managers on the implementation of family-friendly policies; and,
- Providing employees with information about child and elder care resources currently available in their local communities.

Federal agencies such as the Department of Justice, Department of Labor, Department of State, Department of Energy, Centers for Disease Control, Defense Logistics Agency, US Mint, Library of Congress, CIA and Office of Thrift Supervision have contracted with LifeCare, Inc. to provide for resource and referral services on topics such as elder and child care.

NIH has a Work and Family Life Center on its Bethesda campus. The Center services 18,000 employees who work in 28 institutes located in Maryland, North Carolina, Arizona and Montana. The Center is managed by a GS 12/13 federal employee with a masters degree in counseling who manages a staff of three, conducts worklife consultations and meets with employees to help them solve problems of balancing work and life. Another federal employee serves as a program specialist and manages the worklife seminar series, Worklife Center Program marketing, the resource library, web site and other special projects. The Center also employs a Career Consultant, a contractor who provides career management and human resources services, and a secretary who is the Center's point of contact for consultations, library loans and worklife seminar reservations.

NIH has contracted with Lifework Strategies, Inc. (LWS), a company located in Rockville, MD to provide elder/adult dependent care consulting, child care resources and referrals, legal resources and referral services, and personal finance resource services. LWS charges NIH

\$5.50 per employee for its referral services -- with 18,000 employees, this totals \$99,000. LWS also provides a list of topics for worklife seminars NIH is interested in holding and they locate speakers to conduct the sessions. The cost for this service is negotiated separately from the referral services.

NOAA could extend its contract with Caliber, Fried and Sher (CF&S), or contract with a company like LWS to ensure that its employees receive the best services in helping them to create to and maintain worklife balance. LWS may be better able to meet the needs of NOAA Field employees, because it provides a community approach to service delivery by utilizing the counsel and resources specific to each geographic location. LWS accesses local area affiliates nationwide to gain community based knowledge to serve employees. It has built partnerships and allegiances nationwide with community based services and agencies that best know their community members, and have local knowledge of the unique characteristics of their areas. This approach could increase usage of the Center by field employees and increase the understanding of the needs of remote employees.

The cost of CF&S to manage the Worklife Center from May 01 - April 02 was \$164,578. The contract was extended from May 02 - June 02 at a cost of \$16,286. If NOAA chooses to exercise the option to extend the contract from July 02 - September 02 the cost would be an additional \$26,726.40, resulting in \$43,012.80 in additional expenses for FY 02. Next fiscal year, the cost would increase from \$164,578 to \$171,167 (see table below).

#### **Costs of Operating the Worklife Center**

<b>CF&amp;S (May 01 - April 02)</b>	<b>Hourly Rate</b>	<b>Number of Hours</b>	<b>Labor Costs</b>	<b>Incidental Costs</b>	<b>Total Costs</b>
Principal	\$143.75	48	\$6,900		\$ 6,900
Analysts	\$ 52.20	2,990	\$156,078	\$1,600	\$157,678
					<b>\$164,578</b>
<b>CF&amp;S (May 02 - June 02)</b>	\$52.20	312	\$16,286.40		<b>\$ 16,286.40</b>
<b>CF&amp;S (July 02 - Sept 02)</b>	\$52.20	812	\$26,726.40		<b>\$ 26,726.40</b>
<b>CF&amp;S (FY 2003)</b>			\$169,502	\$1,665	<b>\$171,167</b>

If NOAA would consider contracting with LWS to manage the Worklife Center, the cost would be approximately \$75,000 --- a potential savings of \$96,167 a year. This cost includes an onsite Worklife Advisor to manage the Center 5 days a week; scheduling the use of the lactation and relaxation rooms; individually counseling employees on worklife issues and offering information, advice and assistance on various worklife issues; producing a monthly newsletter; conducting resource fairs and seminars; and designing and conducting support groups tailored to the needs of NOAA employees.

## **Conclusion**

Survey and other feedback show that customers value the services they receive and continue to look forward to new information, programs, and resources. Not only has it been proven that the Worklife Program is a valued service to NOAA employees, recent Worklife studies support the notion that programs like this one are becoming crucial to employee productivity, retention and motivation.

The marketplace and internal feedback on the NOAA Worklife Program show the continued need to develop and strengthen the services the NOAA Employee Worklife Center offers. The recommendations in this report summarize enhancements that can be made to the program. Many of these can be easily accomplished. Considerations should be given to conducting a true return on investment analysis of NOAA's innovative Worklife programs.

By continuing the services of the Worklife Center, NOAA will continue to honor its commitment to enhance the quality of worklife by increasing employee well-being. NOAA will also remain among the few government agencies offering a comprehensive worklife program of this type to increase employee satisfaction, commitment, retention and productivity.



## **Appendix**

### **Customer Feedback**

#### **Response to the questions on the Employee Worklife Center Feedback Form:**

##### **First time using Center**

Yes - 83%                      No - 17%

##### **Initial contact by**

Web - 45%                      In Person - 50%                      Phone - 4%

##### **Inquiry returned within 24hrs?**

Yes - 59%                      N/A - 41%

##### **Was the advisor knowledgeable?**

Yes - 79%                      No - 3%                      N/A 17%

##### **Would you use resources again?**

Yes - 87%                      Depends - 13%

##### **Would you recommend the Center?**

Yes - 72%                      No - 3%                      Depends - 20%

##### **Service/resources used**

read/browsed/checked out references	23%
requested material mailed	17%
spoke with advisor	43%
used reading/relaxation room	7%

##### **Topic discussed/requested**

Elder care	17%
Child care	7%
Parenting young children	13%
Parenting teens	3%
Financial planning	13%
Health and wellness	30%
Other	23%

##### **Referred to another office?**

Yes - 10%                      No - 86%

##### **How did you learn about Center?**

newsletter	20%
web/email	63%

word of mouth	3%
HR	7%
walk-in	13 %

**I am aware of services**

Yes - 73%    No - 7%    Somewhat - 17%

**Did the advisor explain the services?**

Yes - 47%    NA - 40%

**Are the hours flexible enough?**

Yes - 80%    No - 7%    N/A - 7%    Not Sure - 3%

**The advisor made me feel comfortable**

Excellent	70%
Good	20%
Good/Satisfactory	3%
Satisfactory	7%

**The materials received were customized**

Excellent	40%
Good	23%
Good/Satisfactory	3%
Satisfactory	17%
N/A	17%

**Quality of services received**

Excellent	47%
Good	33%
Good/Satisfactory	7%
Satisfactory	7%
Unsatisfactory	3%

**Center met expectations**

Excellent	47%
Good	33%
Good/Satisfactory	3%
Satisfactory	7%
Unsatisfactory	10%

**Do you feel this on-site Center/Service is a valuable companion to EAP?**

“Yes.”

*"No, I get a much better selection of current books at the local library."*

*"Yes, it helps to have a persons face to directly speak to."*

*"No opinion, never used EAP."*

*"Yes, it further enhances EAP with a variety of resources on a number of different life concerning issues."*

*"I don't associate the two as the same or one as an extension of the other. I have concerns over privacy."*

*"Yes, but more personal and handy to visit."*

*"Yes, because it gives people the opportunity to get information without feeling as though they are enrolling."*

*"Never used EAP, so can't really comment."*

*"This one is convenient."*

*"I have used EAP, the Center's services seemed more customized."*

*"I'm not familiar with EAP."*

*"No opinion on this."*

*"More direct. Located at workplace - onsite room excellent to de-stress and remove oneself from work environment."*

*"Yes, in many cases the info at the center can be used to prevent the need for EAP."*

*"Sure, there are issues that are appropriate for the EAP and not the EWC and vice versa."*

*"Yes, if they reply ASAP."*

### **Additional Feedback**

*"I use the center primarily for relaxation and for the massage chair."*

*"My limited dealings with the center have been very positive, I look forward to more in the future."*

*"Please retain these services .. available now and even more so in the future, thanks."*

*"Center has good information."*

*"I was sure to call during normal Eastern Time business hours."*

*"I think it is a good idea. Keep it going."*

*"I wish there was a center on the West Coast"*

**Comments sent directly to the Center or to the Office of Diversity:**

*"You folks are good...thanks for your service."*

*"...the lactation room is so nice. In my building I usually have to pump in the bathroom."*

*"The relaxation chair is great! I need to tell my husband about it."*

*"Yes! Finally, I can get some help dealing with stress. The center has saved me a lot of headaches."*

*"Thanks for not forgetting about the folks in the field. This is a useful service."*

*"This is a very good resource...very nice atmosphere..."*

*"I love the relaxation chair...I might exchange my bed for a chair like that one..."*

*"This is a very nice newsletter, loaded with useful, practical information. Keep up the great work!"*

*"I just reviewed the latest issue of Navigations and wanted to let someone know how helpful I feel that information will be for those with senior parents. I recently lost my mother, who suffered with Alzheimer's, and had learned many of the answers to the quiz and the holiday suggestions the hard way. Thanks for providing such a great service for those who are just beginning the journey. "*

*"I wanted to let you know that I like Navigations, and the list under "6 Strategies to Balance Work and Family" [is] exactly what I need to share with a now retired former co-worker. She is frazzled with all of her responsibilities, and I couldn't articulate what she need[s] to do to address her obligations responsibly without making herself sick. "6 Strategies..." is the sort of thing she needs. So I'm sharing them with her. And I'm sure they will help."*

*"I believe we could really benefit from each other. The Fitness Center is a benefit to the employees – physically and emotionally. They work better – at their jobs and with their co-workers. So we are really a big part of their work life. I would be interested in*

*working with you to promote the Fitness Center through the Worklife Center and vice versa."*

*"I've just read the first issue (Navigations) and think it is great! The suggestions for those working split shifts will be quite useful. I look forward to future issues."*

*"Congratulations on your fine start with the Worklife Center. I particularly appreciate your interest working with field sites."*

*"Thank you for your efforts in creating the Navigations newsletter... Thank you again for a great newsletter."*

*"Aloha...You really have excelled in setting up the Work Life Center. Congratulations."*

*"Just wanted to say thank you for the "Navigations" newsletter and to let you know how excited I am to learn about your program... I can't begin to tell you how much I value the information you're providing. My sincere thanks to you and your staff for an excellent program."*

*"Thanks for the opportunity to provide input."*

### **Feedback from the Navigations Survey:**

Services offered by the Center are beneficial to NOAA employees

Yes - 77%

No - 15%

Have you used the services offered by the Center

Yes - 37%

No - 59%

Continue the services in Headquarters

Yes - 71%

No - 17%

Expand the services to the Field

Yes- 70%

No - 19%

*"I've only been an employee of NOAA for six months, helping to work my way through grad school. I went to HQ for some training a while back and was amazed by the perks*

*that were available. The Gym, daycare and other options would really keep field employees who feel distanced from HQ more motivated, and would enjoy their job more. It just seems to me (in my humble opinion) that it takes a while for things at HQ to trickle down to field offices. Telecommuting would be a great example. I often hear of people at EASC telecommuting, however up here we have not heard anything about it. We recently had an employee here who was out on sick leave for a month or so. She was in great shape health wise except she was recovering from surgery and not too mobile. It would have been great if could have set her up with telecommuting, the office would not have felt understaffed and she wouldn't have had to deplete her sick leave to low levels."*

*"WorkLife Center should combine forces with the NOAA Fitness Center to collaborate and co-sponsor events, seminars, etc. The NOAA Fitness Center would appreciate having its web page hosted by OFA and provided with more visibility and support from NOAA. The WorkLife Center would be a great way to do that."*

*"This is a phenomenal resource. PLEASE continue! PLEASE expand into the field. Thank you."*

*"I like the Center. It shows that NOAA is an employee-friendly place."*

*"I have been using the lactation room and prefer checking out the key rather than being escorted to the room."*

*"Not being in SSMC I missed the service I wanted to hear. The magazine is good but many topics are taken care of by the NOAA nurse. Perhaps penny just doesn't have the right background experience to make it worth keeping."*

*"Should be expanded to include things like smoking cessation."*

*"I CAN'T utilize this center b/c I'm in Germantown. Many of the issues I would REALLY REALLY LOVE to have support on (aging parents, single parenting (yep, I'm a "sandwich" caregiver), etc., I would really love support with. BUT, I can't get to Silver Spring. PLEASE expand some of these services to Germantown (or even Gaithersburg). It would help us a lot, too. Thanks:) Oh, and having this sent in an e-mail is helpful b/c I don't always get things mailed in holey-joes, besides, it is environmentally friendlier."*

*"It's really a neat idea - I have enjoyed participating and knowing that I'm not alone in facing my problems."*

*"(Would like ) a second massage chair."*

*"I would like to see more financial planning seminars and debt management seminars."*

*"Provisions for a health and wellness program could be provided to the field offices and offer to them opportunities for a more healthy and productive work environment."*

*"It would be really nice if the employees here at the Norman facility could access such privileges. Please consider adding this benefit to our area. thanks"*

*"Kiosks of written material de-stress room - even though I haven't used it I like knowing its there library materials."*

*"Work place safety"*

*"I'm not sure what services you speak of because out here "in the field" we don't get any of the special services that the folks in HQ get. Like seminars, workshops and the like..."*

*"The center should also focus on issues pertaining to adults sans children. The newsletter is way too child oriented. For instance, the section on divorce or separation DOES NOT even mention the adult perspective in these events. Obviously, something is wrong with the way Americans perceive the institution of marriage. Why not promote parenting education, planned parenthood and other preventative steps that people should be aware of in case their relationship fails..."*

*"I have used the lactation room, and very much appreciate that you have made it available to lactating mothers. I have also enjoyed reading the newsletter, and find it more useful and informative than MOST government sponsored newsletters. I think it would be preferable if the newsletter were in html form, instead of in pdf format. I can see that the pdf format would be useful if you are printing it out, but I mostly read it through the browser, so the column format and the pdf format in general is not as easy to navigate around as would be an html document."*

*"Heavy emphasis on child-related issues is not helpful to those of us who are childless or whose children have grown and left home. Something that would benefit all employees is more advice on diet and health and encouragement to exercise. I would like to see NOAA site-based exercise facilities become more common and receive more support both in encouraging employees to use the facilities and better funding."*

*"How come there is nothing for the field staff?"*

*"Stock some audio tapes for automobile-bound commuters."*

*"I like the valuable information I receive from the Worklife Center. I give it 10 rating for excellent."*

*"Have not used the center, but the newsletter is great. Keep it going!"*

*"Handicapped employee assistance; job sharing assistance; networking for women;*

*underrepresented minority assistance. if you no longer have an office, than you should at least be available, bookmobile style...I had no idea that you were considering disbanding or that this was a pilot program ! In fact this is troublesome. I have only been there once, meant to go back but the workload is such that I have been unable to do so. I have talked to other people about it and everyone has had the same experience, too busy or perceived as too busy. Major disappointment that I was unable to avail myself of services. I have talked to others about possibly reserving meeting space there in the work life center for the purpose of forming focus groups about work related labor issues....major disappointment that you "will be leaving."*

*"I have read the articles in the newsletter and found them interesting and helpful. However, if you are in the field, it is difficult to get the full benefits of participating in the support groups, etc."*

*"All worklife center items seem focused on family issues. There are lonely singles in NOAA that could use help in meeting people, getting out, and having fun instead of sitting in their apartment alone all weekend. Look at what NIH has done."*

*"There should be more information added for continuing education and how to go about obtaining it."*

*"I think this is a good center, but services are probably not used as much due to the age demographics of NOAA employees. Most are independent by a certain age and either feel that they can resolve their own issues or not interested in career issues at this time in their life. Once the feds (or if) they hire a younger pool as the oldies leave, then this idea can be very valuable, esp. if you get 20 somethings input on its use."*

*"Keep the monthly newsletter. It is the only thing the field offices can use. Make video tapes available to the field. If this service is already available, it isn't well publicized!!"*

*"Great resource I have used many times. It is too bad the Human Resources Office isn't as helpful as this center for NOAA employees. Please keep the center in operation."*

*"I recommend the Center to my employees as freely as recommending the EAP for personal assistance."*

*"These services should be made available to contractor staff as well as Federal Employees."*

*"All services should be con't. Services sound good from a distance, but since I live on the west coast, most are not accessible to me. I appreciate reading the navigations newsletter."*

*"Because I am in the field and get no use from the headquarters center, I find the most*



*use from reading Navigations. I would continue Navigations at a minimum and seek to expand services."*

*"As a relatively new employee, I have not made use of the Center's services, but would expect to do so in the future, if these services are continued."*

*"Support groups for employees with life threatening conditions should be expanded to field offices to assist employees in coping. This could be done with video conferencing or teleconferencing."*

*"I think it is fine the way it is now."*

*"Lactation room (there should be one in every building)."*

*"The services were not available to employees outside of the SSMC area."*

*"Expand the program to the field. It was of no value to me since I work away from Silver Spring. I would read about activities that I could never participate in since I don't work in Silver Spring."*

*"[Include something on] self defense."*

*"Video teleconferencing should be offered to the field locations when discussion groups or meetings are held."*

*"Contracts set up with career counselors to assist employees with advancing their careers."*

*"Looks like a nice program for headquarters but not much use for those in the regions."*

*"I've been out the last year on extended SL caring for my husband. He had Lung Cancer and passed away on Jan. 31 this year. Today I am completing my first week back at work and have been reading my mail. In my opinion, the Worklife Center is a program that should be continued.. I will benefit from the information provided. Let's face it, we could all use positive reinforcement at work."*

*"I vote for keeping up this website."*

*"It's a good idea and deserves continued support and funding."*

*"Increase marketing the facility to employees."*

*"Have a lactation room in every building within the Silver Spring Metro Complex. Do NOT discontinue the lactation room in Building 3."*

*"Perhaps visiting mental health workers could be contracted to call upon our more remote sites both domestic and internationally, say on a 2-3x year schedule. As a new employee with COMMERCE, I service a regional area which encompasses extremely remote both in location, available culture, and weather. I am concerned about the mental health of the employees and their dependents at such posts. We should use our resource for such projects to reach those: 1. MOST IN POTENTIAL NEED 2. Without other available choices in their immediate working area. For instance, there are thousands of potential treatment centers, individual therapists, group therapy etc...in most of our larger cities, especially in Washington, D.C., so, perhaps more of our funding should go toward education/referrals in the metropolitan areas. Utilizing more of our financial resources to provide much needed services to our employees in remote work sites. Thanks! "*

*"Keep the newsletter going for the employees in all field offices. Thank you, good work!"*

*"I have not recently checked with the Center however I had inquired about any retirement services regarding information for those of us who have 30 plus years in at the agency. Since I recently got another degree in a field other than what I have been employed in the last 4 decades with NOAA, I was informed that the Center may be able to help me to find outside work on a part time basis, therefore if these services do exist I feel that they should be expanded and continued. Also, being a grandparent I recently inquired about services that may be provided in rendering information about the relationship a grandparent has with his grand daughters and sons. Here again, I talked to the lady at the exhibit in the cafeteria and she assured me that back at the Center any needed material that may interest me may be available. As yet I have not found the time to check it out however intend to do so."*

*"Uniform delivery of similar services to all field offices may not be possible. Do what is possible."*

*"Find ways for field offices to attend sessions. Since many of the field offices are small, perhaps a partnership could be formed with other government agencies, or sessions could be held in centralized locations so folks from several offices could attend."*

*"It's a great idea to have, but for those of us in the field, we really cannot and have not benefitted."*

*"A few months ago I used the Center while I was having (and still am!) problems with my supervisor. I was given a number to call and some handouts on stress, working with difficult people, etc. The handouts were helpful but the 4 meetings with a therapist were OUTSTANDING! He helped me put a lot of things in perspective and suggested things to focus on during my future (May 2002) radiation treatments for brain cancer. Training classes: dealing with difficult managers, dealing with employees that have cancer, etc.? Most importantly, is there anything available for women working for impossible female supervisors? We really need this issue addressed!!!"*

*"Please - do not refer to children with special needs as "special needs children" - there is a subtle but important difference."*

*"We in the field are just at a loss to share in things. couldn't we have say a day every other week with someone?"*

*"Foster sense of community; more specialty group meetings, volunteer activities, bike rides, knitting club, power walking during lunch, etc."*

*"I can't access the page on the web at all."*

*"I really like that message/relaxation chair. Sometimes, though I get so busy I can't get over there to use it. Please don't take it away."*

*"Offer some services to the other sites (World Weather Building, Suitland etc)."*

*"It would be helpful to provide to the field in-house seminars on common topics, such as balancing work/home, managing time/prioritizing tasks, etc. I found material provided by the center on balancing work and personal life to be very helpful, and it has helped improve my productivity. I have been surprised at the effectiveness of some of the simple tips."*

*"The lactation and relaxation rooms are greatly appreciated but I feel underutilized. The monthly informative meeting should also be continued but it definitely needs more publicity."*

*"Expand these services so that employees in the field have an opportunity to take advantage of them. If nothing else, hold Resource Fairs and Seminars in field locations."*

*"Good idea."*

*"Keep up the good work."*

*"Help that reduces work, family, and marital stress is always appreciated."*

*"I have never used the services because I do not work inside the beltway. The services need to be expanded to all of the field offices. It's hard to utilize a facility that's 1500 miles away."*

*"Working out in a field office, all of these articles are extremely helpful. It makes me feel that the government really does care about it's workers. Please continue your great efforts in helping us carry and balance worklife and homelife."*

*"I am in the field, and haven't had the opportunity to use the services. I've only had the*

*time to read one newsletter, but it would seem to be a worthwhile venture. Good luck."*

*"Services should be expanded to the field but only through internet or other method that does not involve a physical setup (too expensive)."*

*"When we use the worklife center we have to be concerned about the boss. I would use it more if the supervisor would give time away from work without to use the center. We need the exercised paid for by NOAA and time permitted to do so without using your lunch time."*

*"It needs to be more usable, like a massage, time of relaxation, some counseling if we need it, some spiritual encouragement, budget counseling, more career driven activities But overall it is good to have it give another person employment."*

*"Publications, Booklets, Audio and/or Video Presentations on Selected Services would be helpful."*

*"I have found it to be real informative. I recently transferred from working with the Dept. of Defense have used the information made available to me. It also raised questions of subjects that I was not aware of at the time. I have not used all of Worklife Center resources for the past year. But, I sure hope they will still be made available in the future."*

*"I really like all the little ideas that can help us lead better personal lives such as shift work, health tips, family tips, financial tips, etc."*

*"I have used and benefitted from the center given my location in Silver Spring. I believe we need to assess the value of the center in light of the OFA results and determine what would be most helpful to provide to employees."*

*"Continue with information about elderly care, continuing education, health and exercise, retirement, etc. have more information available in the field and in other regions."*

*"The web-site does not appear when you click on it, an error msg says not available. But, They were very helpful and prompt in their response to my inquiry for help with my daughter's problems. The Counseling Service company had changed, and no one seemed to know who the new contract was with... The counselor she went to see was excellent. However, the visits were limited to only four, which is certainly not enough to help with a problem. Also, she could not refer my daughter to another counselor at the end of the sessions, for continuity of therapy. I'm very grateful to know there is a service like the Life Center out there when I need some assistance. Thanks very much."*

*"Articles & workshops on team building and team etiquette could be helpful...especially in times of rapid change and high turnover rate of employees & contract workers."*

*"The Work Life Center meets real needs. I spoke with a financial counselor there and he gave me two important directions for me to improve my short term savings. The two bits of advice are easy to implement and my family agrees they are important steps which I should take to improve my finances. I recommend retaining the Work Life Center for the next few years, at the very minimum."*

*"Please expand the services to field employees. Often we feel forgotten."*

*"The lactation room is a critical benefit to the (admittedly few) people who need it. Definitely continue to provide this room !!!"*

*"Is good as is."*

*"The aquarium should be moved to the main area of the worklife center, so should the relaxation chair."*

*"Have classes/presentations by outside providers as to what county and private resources are available in the community on various topics. Such as: elder care, Couples counseling, mental health."*

*"The electronic newsletter is very helpful to those of us not located at headquarters. This is a great service! Please keep it going!"*

*"Diversity Training for all NOAA Staff is needed."*

*"I submitted my survey but I would also like to give you a wonderful source for dealing with stress. That is, meditation or reflection, however you identify with it. To meditate you do not need to be a Buddhist, or Hindu or any other religion, meditation is simply learning to quiet the "monkey mind" we have. I have been fortunate enough to have had some wonderful teachers and it has helped me tremendously in dealing with everyday life. Please read the below caption from Spirit Rock Meditation Center, which I attended in April 2000, in order to learn this style of meditation. I highly recommend this Vipassana Meditation. The notes below describe what Vipassana Meditation is and what seminars and classes they offer at Spirit Rock. I understand there is a group right there in Wash. DC that has held classes on it, and may be having regular meetings. If you are interested in giving out the particulars I'll get on the website at home and help you track the group."*

*"Good source of information."*

*"I'm very grateful to know there is a service like the Life Center out there when I need some assistance. Thanks very much."*

*"The services are needed especially for stress. It's relaxing when you can go someplace quiet and peaceful. I think a center should be in each building."*

*"Continue services that deal with places for employees or their families to iron out their personal problems."*

*"Education of children, retirement issues, Health Issues, Work related issues on stress, safety, etc. Almost all issues have been useful. Your Website links are great!!"*

*"This survey is answered only from my own experience. I do not and most likely will not use the NOAA Employee Worklife Center. If it is useful for other NOAA employees, it should be continued."*

*"I believe the service is useful. I just have not found the need to use it personally; but I would like to know that the service was there if I did need it."*

*"I like the service of being able to come down and visit for an hour and read materials on Stress. Also being able to see the other services that are available. I have recommended the Worklife Center."*

*"Library of pamphlets and books, continue to staff with contractor."*

*"More seminars and more notification of seminars."*

*"I believe the power in this program will be in its extension beyond the head office. I have been limited in by ability to take advantage of some of the programs because they only occur in D.C."*

*"Newsletter is very helpful."*

*"Yes it should [continue]."*

*"Besides the emails, NOAA needs to advertise the availability of the worklife center more - maybe brochures, posters, etc. I feel as though many people have forgotten it exists even though they ask questions about things in the newsletter."*

*" [More] counseling on personal and family problems."*

*"Continue Financial counseling."*

*"It is an asset to NOAA. It needs more promotion. I do not know if a lot of people are aware of the program."*

*"I am in a field office in New Bedford, MA. Really wish I could be closer somehow to utilize the Worklife Center. It offers very practical and valuable topics in the newsletter and I support the center as a whole. Keep it going!"*

*"NOAA National Locator has Mobile area code as 334. It has changed to 251 as of 1*

Jan."

*"Very informative and helpful services--please continue!"*

## **Negative Comments**

*"Make newsletter available on paper at the Center. I had problems opening it on-line"*

*"This service is unnecessary. We can all use the Web to find such information."*

*"I think folks should have a more complete list of local child care services."*

*"I'm sure the information you provide is well intended, but it seems like a waste of tax dollars and our time. Who sits around thinking of ways to provide more goofy but cute job ideas to help get us through life with all its trials and complexities..."*

*"Most resources were not available to employees outside of the Washington D.C. area. the resource library and seminars may have been useful to those who work in NOAA headquarters. It is actually insulting and demoralizing to receive emails in my NOAA field office (several thousand miles from Washington) inviting me to take advantage of the "great services". The web services were just plain awful. I work rotating shifts and one web site suggested "trying to get more sleep" as a means to coping with shift work. Duh!! the problem with shift work is you can't get enough quality sleep. If NOAA is truly concerned with employee worklife issues, perhaps they could provide true overtime pay for scientists providing life saving services, be more responsive to alternative work schedules, and better educate LOCAL managers on family friendly policies,( since the idea of family friendly loses some meaning when you must file a grievance just to get basic benefits that all federal employees are entitled to.) The web services information was presented at an elementary school grade level. If we were really as stupid as NOAA implies we are by the patronizing "help", then it is a wonder this agency works at all!"*

*"At the local library, I can get a better selection of up-to-date books on the same subject. Turnover in Center staff is not conducive to effective service."*

*"Another waste of resources, along with the diversity council. Encourage people to stand on their own two feet instead of relying on gov't funded programs."*

*"It is a waste of tax \$\$ and people should find other means to have their own taken care of. Let's all grow up and quit looking into the endless valley of human needs to care for."*

*"The center is absolutely and totally worthless to all of us in the field. And this is truly sad considering that the vast majority of NOAA employees are in fact located in the field. All your newsletter does is remind us in the field of services we never, ever had,*

won't ever get, and shouldn't even consider given the attention and money focused on us."

*"[Discontinue] the HQ office. Maybe put the office at KC training center, or some other location where HQ personnel face the same obstacles to borrowing items and attending activities as the field does. Be less HQ-centric, or maybe make HQ feel more like the field. All these workshops, health fairs, etc in Silver Spring don't do a thing for the majority of NOAA employees because they can't attend them! Ditto having videos, etc at a HQ center!"*

*"This is all good stuff, but stuff we get elsewhere and at a more receptive time."*

*"No topics or support for addictions. As always, benefits D.C. types, no benefit to field offices. I don't think determining whether I weigh too much or not is really that important. For the money spent, you just don't provide enough hard hitting information a person can use. Too unfocused."*

*"We should cut the waste."*

*"Everything covered to date, has been basic common sense info. Gov't funds could be better spent elsewhere, I would be embarrassed if the public found out about NOAA funds going towards this. Sorry."*

*"Don't need it, don't want it, won't use it. Please stop wasting my tax money on this type of baloney. Is this a make work program for NOAA employees to administer who are unqualified to do any kind of productive work?"*

*"The articles I read in navigations were overly simplistic and the information could be found elsewhere. Sorry, but how about putting this money back into NOAA research and activities?"*

*"Comment on different subject. The new EAP system is not good. They offer telephone counseling and simple advice that any friend could give, like "maybe you should see a doctor." Try them out with a hypothetical situation, e.g. "spouse says she is thinking about getting a divorce/separation."*

*"Just what is considered to be "the field"? I've worked out of a small field station my entire career providing input for decision makers in D.C. I did go to Silver Spring for an award ceremony once and was appalled by the expanse of government bureaucracy there. Don't you realize that there are people working out of small field stations all over the country who at times need help with personal and other problems? Quit concentrating services on the D.C. area! Provide services to people in the field."*

*"Advice and assistance in all areas by request. A newsletter is too general to be helpful. There is hardly enough time in the day to get the work done, much less to read a*



*newsletter. Reduce center to an on-call facility that has capabilities of helping with special requests."*

*"The notices have not enticed me to investigate this service, nor have I had a need causing me to do so. In essence, I do not know what this service is nor what its benefits might be relative to the costs to the Agency for running it."*

*"I read the article on how to better cope with rotating shifts and this is the type of guidance it offered: "Rotating shifts workers should try to get on a regular sleep schedule." If this is the kind of advice the center offers, there is no need for it."  
"All services (should be discontinued)...we need more field employees and not more headquarters paper-pushers. Close it immediately!"*